

CLAIMS:

1. An electric toaster for use in the toasting of a food product, said toaster comprising

5 a body;

within said body, at least one cavity for receipt of said food product;

10 associated with said at least one cavity, at least one toasting element for toasting the food product; and

an electrical power control system for controlling the power of said at least one toasting element,

15 wherein said electrical power control system incorporates at least two different power on settings and the at least one toasting element is switchable between said at least two different power on settings during a toasting operation.

20 2. An electric toaster according to claim 1, wherein the at least one cavity is in the form of a slot shaped to receive a bread slice.

3. An electric toaster according to either of claims 1 or 2, wherein any of the at least two different power on settings is pre-set.

25 4. An electric toaster according to claim 3, wherein a normal and high power setting are pre-defined.

30 5. An electric toaster according to claim 4, wherein the normal power setting corresponds to a power of from 700 to 1100W and the high power setting corresponds to a power of from 1300 to 1700W.

6. An electric toaster according to claim 3, wherein a normal and low power setting are pre-defined.

7. An electric toaster according to claim 6, wherein the normal power setting corresponds to a power of from 700 to 1100W and the low power setting corresponds to a power of from 300 to 700W.

8. An electric toaster according to any of claims 1 to 7, wherein the at least one toasting element is repeatedly switchable between the at least two different power on settings during a toasting operation.

9. An electric toaster according to claim 8, wherein switching between the at least two different power on settings follows a pre-defined cycle.

10. An electric toaster according to claim 9, wherein the pre-defined cycle involves operation at a first power on setting for a first time period and then at a second power on setting for a second time period and subsequent repetitions thereof.

11. An electric toaster according to claim 10, wherein the first time period is from 15 to 25 seconds and the second time period is from 5 to 15 seconds.

12. An electric toaster according to claim 11, wherein the full toasting cycle is from 60 to 120 seconds.

13. An electric toaster according to any of claims 1 to 12, wherein the electrical control system additionally comprises an electronic data management system.

14. An electric toaster according to claim 13, wherein the electronic data management system includes a data input system for user input of data thereto.

15. An electric toaster according to either of claims 13 or 14, additionally comprising a sensor selected from the group consisting of heat sensors; browning sensors; reflectance sensors; particle sensors; moisture sensors; and movement sensors.
16. An electric toaster element system suitable for use in an electric toaster according to any of claims 1 to 15, said toaster element system comprising
- at least one toasting element for toasting said food product; and
- an electrical power control system for controlling the power of said at least one toasting element,
- wherein said electrical power control system incorporates at least two different power on settings and the at least one toasting element is switchable between said at least two different power on settings during a toasting operation.
17. A method of toasting of a food product, said method comprising
- (a) associating said food product with at least one toasting element;
- (b) applying electrical power to said at least one toasting element at a first power on setting for a first time period;
- (c) applying electrical power to said at least one toasting element at a second power on setting for a second time period; and
- (d) optionally, repeating steps (b) and (c).

18. A method according to claim 17, wherein steps (b) and (c) are repeated at least once.

5 19. A method according to either of claims 17 or 18, wherein the first and second power on settings are pre-set.

10 20. A method according to any of claims 17 to 19, wherein the first power on setting corresponds to a power of from 700 to 1100W and the second power on setting corresponds to a power of from 1300 to 1700W.

21. A method according to any of claims 17 to 19, wherein the first power on setting corresponds to a power of from 700 to 1100W and the second power on setting corresponds to a power of from 300 to 700W.

15 22. A method according to any of claims 17 to 21, wherein the length of the first and second time periods is pre-defined.

23. A method according to claim 22, wherein the first time period is from 15 to 25 seconds and the second time period is from 5 to 15 seconds.

20 24. A method according to claim 23, wherein the full toasting cycle is from 60 to 120 seconds.

25 25. A computer program product for use with an electric toaster comprising a digital computer comprising software code portions for performing, or requesting user input enabling the performing, of the software implementable steps of a method according to claims 17 to 24, when said program is run on said digital computer.